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Testifying in support of House Bill 4160

Best Western Sterling Inn started with 11 units in 1960 and has grown over the years into the largest hotel/convention center in Macomb County. With 246 guest rooms, over 15,000 square feet of meeting space, a 32,000 square foot indoor water park, and a full service restaurant, the Hotel attracts visitors from around the world when they visit the Macomb County area.

Catering to the business traveler during the week, the hotel enjoys widespread appeal with families and out of state travelers on the weekends and during the summer due to the water park and conference center. In recent years, the dramatic decline of the business traveler has made it even more imperative that the hotel pursue weekend business to keep the 200 staff members gainfully employed.

While rarely thought of, 60% of visitors to Metro Detroit are leisure visitors who are directly impacted by advertising campaigns. There were more than 6.5 million day visitors to the region for cultural events, festivals, sporting events, etc. They spent over \$439 million resulting in tax revenue and most importantly, employment. Metro Detroit has much to offer visitors with such venues as Major League Baseball, Football, and Hockey as well as The Henry Ford, The Detroit Science Center, The Detroit Zoo, etc. With such major attractions to offer, it is readily apparent why Metro Detroit enjoys so many visitors and demonstrates why it is so important to market these assets to those who live outside our State.

The Pure Michigan Campaign is vital in showing residents of surrounding States the wonderful options for the visitor that are available in Michigan and Metro Detroit. Showing the attractions and beauty of Michigan to those residents interested in a weekend or week long visit increases occupancy in hotels throughout the State. More importantly, those travelers not only spend money on hotel rooms, they also spend with local merchants who in turn purchase from other Michigan suppliers thus magnifying the income received by the State of Michigan.

The \$25 Million annual appropriation for the Pure Michigan Campaign included in HB 4160 should not be considered as a cost but rather as an investment in Michigan. Studies have shown that for every dollar spent by the State to attract tourism, more than two dollars of revenue is realized in increased income to the State.

In these trying times, we all must look for ways to trim expenditures, but reducing costs that reduce income more than the cost savings is a phantom savings.